Minister, Mr. Igor Rogachev who had visited Delhi recently; and

(b) whether there is any change in the Soviet Union's attitude towards India because of the drastic change in its relationship with the United States and its own internal problems?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR): (a) Both sides reviewed bilateral relations in different fields and exchanged views on global issues.

(b) Traditionally close and friendly Indo-Soviet ties have been steadily deve- loping over the years. Mr. Rogachev conveyed the Soviet Union's commitment to further strengthening our multifaceted cooperation to mutual benefit.

Developing Inland Waterways

*156. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to develop Inland Waterways in a way so as to reduce fuel consumption;

(b) if so, the details of the Inland Waterways to be developed;

(c) whether Government have asked the Shipping Corporation of India to submit a plan in this regard immediately;

(d) whether the Shipping Corporation of India h; s since submitted its plan to Government; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RE SOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHAR GE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANUBHAI KOTADIA): (a) Yes, Sir. The IWT is an energy efficient mode of Transport.

(b) At present, decision exists for the development of the following waterways as National Waterways;

(i) Allahabad-Haldia stretch of the Ganga-Bhagirathi Hooghly river system which was declared as a National Waterway on 27-10-86.

(ii) Sadiya-Dhubri stretch of the river Brahmaputra which was declared as a National Waterway on 26-12-88.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Steps against noise pollution in the cities

157. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government propose to take to meet the alarming noise pollution in our cities and damage to health as brought out in the Indian Express dated 23rd September, 1990;

(b) whether it is a fact that even the silence zones near Hospitals are no longer being observed in the Capital; and

(c) whether any detailed studies have been carried out in India on the health problems created by noise and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY): (a) The steps taken by Government for environmental noise control include:

(i) Ambient air quality standards in respect of noise have been prescribed for Industrial, Commercial, Residential and Silence Zones; separate limits have been set for day and night time. Noise limits have also been prescribed for automobiles, domestic appliances and construction equipment at the manufacturing stage. Noise limits for automobiles have to be achieved by 1992, while those for other equipment are to be achieved by 1993.

(ii) Guidelines for permissible noise exposure for industrial workers have been laid down.

(iii) Code of practice for controlling noise from sources other than industries and automobiles have been evolved by the Central Pollution control Board. These include public